

Wing S.22.17

A Seasonable

A N S W E R
To a Late
P A M P H L E T,
Entituled,
The Vindication
O F
Slingsby Bethel, Esq;

One of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex.

*By one who is a Citizen of London, and an Inhabitant of
the Borough of Southwark.*

*Nescis quo valeat nummus? quem præbeat usum?
Panis ematur, olsus, vini sextarius: adde
Quæis humana fibi doleat natura negatis.*

Hor. Sat. I.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. Davis. 1681.

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V E N D A

and so

T H E M A G

and so

P O S T M A T

and so

E R I C K S O N

and so

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Y O U R F A M I L Y
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Y O U R D A Y

and so X D a y s

A Seasonable
ANSWER
 To a Late
PAMPHLET,
 ENTITULED,
The Vindication of Slingsby Bethel, Esq; one of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, &c.

THE City of *London* is a place of so great Consideration, and well known to abound so much with men of True Loyalty, undoubted Integrity, plentiful Fortunes, generous Tempers, untainted Credit, and every way fit to discharge its principal Offices, that it cannot be under any necessity of taking up with persons of *Factional Principles*, Moot Honesty, Invisible Estates, narrow and shrivel'd Souls, or Fly-blown Reputations, to disgrace any of the Honourable Employments in it.

And yet to the great surprize of multitudes that did, and that did not know him, Mr. *Slingsby Betbel*, one of the most Notorious, & most Obscure men that ever was made Free of the *Leather-Sellers Company*, was the last year, by the feverish Zeal of a boisterous puffing Party of mistaken Citizens, blown up into a Sheriff of *London* and *Middlesex*, though since that sudden Gust of popular breath is laid, he has dwindled and shrank up into a Thing not commensurate to the Dignity of an *Ale-Conner*.

For now that his fond mis-led Friends have had time to consider and understand him, they have with a Modesty to be encouraged, disown'd the Man and his Manners; and notwithstanding their late Midsummer Complement, upon occasion of Discourse concerning him, have been ready to blush for him since, as much as they sweated for him at first.

The Borough of *Southwark*, comparatively with any other Borough, or indeed City in *England*, is much more a Neighbour to the City of *London* in its Trade and Commerce, and in the number and condition of its Inhabitants, than in its Scituation; and was never so barren of Men, Honest, and Wise, and Wealthy, as that it needed to cross the Water for Burghesses to serve in Parliament.

And yet at the last Election the same *Slingsby Betbel*, having now gained the Additional Title of Mr. *Sheriff* and *Esquire* to promote his pretensions, becomes very officious in tendering us his Service in the House of Commons; and with as little Invitation to our Pockets as ever we had to his Table, over the Bridge come his Horse and He (the principal Burghers being not yet resolv'd which of the two to make a Senator) and being encourag'd by some few male-content Renegado's from amongst us, who like Whifflers came jostling and making Elbow-room for him, he sets up for Himself, and will be our Representative, and put his hands into our Purses whether we will or no.

This way of Addressing the more considerable sort of our Burghers were so unacquainted with, that presently we became curious in searching into the qualifications of a person of such extraordinary Application; and upon enquiry we received

received such a Character of him, as that the least limb of our Body, the Men of Kentstreet it self, would disdain to send him up to Oxford as a Representative Broomstick.

Indeed he had once the Honour to be return'd by the Ward of *Farrindone Without*, one of the two Commoners, of whom the Court of Aldermen were to chuse the more Worthy to be Alderman of their Ward; but it is to be noted, that he had the Honour likewise to be rejected by that wise and impartial Court; both which put together (especially considering the grounds of his boasted *general Consent*, which, in defence of that Ward, I shall in its due place explain) I am apt to think that the advantage of Credit from that Enterprize is not on his part so great, as to give him any just encouragement of hoping ever to arrive at so high a Dignity; but when *Michaelmas* is come, the Retinue discharged, the Horse sold, and the Gold Chain restor'd, he must sit down content to be *Slingsby Bethel in cuero* still.

Now for a Gentleman born and bred, one so well read and travell'd as he has been, and who is of too great a Spirit to stoop to the Office of Executioner, to serve the Greatest Prince that ever was brought to the Block; for such a Man to be so miserably defeated in his pretensions on both sides the Water, to be so scornfully neglected, and re-buff'd in the Borough of *Southwark*, when he came over, resolv'd to be their humble Servant; to be so unexpectedly Dismounted and Un-Burgesed, when his Confidence of Success had already put him to the trouble of preparing some Speeches for the House: And then in the City to be denied Admittance into the Court of Aldermen; and while his younger Brother, the other Sheriff, is a Member of it, for him to be forced to dance Attendance upon it, to be made a Companion to Foot-boys, and to have no other Diversion than what arises from being Spectator of the *Olympick Exercise of Span-Farthing*: These are Indignities which no man of so equal a Mixture of Wit and Bravery, can be expected to pass by un-revenged one way or other.

And therefore his Courage and Fancy being hereby raised, in a short time he boldly sets up for an Author; and that he may be even with *London* and *Southwark* together, he at once publishes a Libel upon both, under the Name of *The Vindication of Slingsby Bethel, &c.*

But certainly this Man is under an ill Fate; he is not more unsuccessful in his Adventures, than unfortunate in writing their *Commentaries*; he plays Booty with his own good Name, in that which he calls his *Vindication*, and washes, and lathers, and scrubs himself so long to no purpose, that he is such a Picture of the *Labour in Vain*, that no Suburb Sign can match him.

He begins with a precarious Assertion of the Innocence of the former part of his Life, thinking no doubt, that being an Old Man, and having been a Traveller, he might have the Liberty which the Proverb allows him; and hoping probably thereby to bury the Remembrance of his Pranks at *Hamburgh* (and I question not but that, as well as he loves Money, he would be glad to be at the Charge of Five Pound to have it done in Linen) but the mischief of it is, there are several Merchants living, who were Witnesses of his Words and Actions there, that can testify his first Paragraph to be false. Indeed he speaks with a great deal of Diffidence of himself, and rather like one that desires, than believes a thing to be true; however sly he carried himself in his *Private Station*, and whatever there may be between God and his own Conscience, yet he tells us, that he did not deserve (as he reasonably hopes) any Reproach from Man. But to see how credulous Interest will make Men! How could he reasonably hope, that none of his Contemporary Merchants at that Staple, should tell his Famous History, and display him in his Colors at their Return into *England*? How

How could he reasonably hope to survive all those who are able to justify to his Face the Truth of what they had related, when he should have the Confidence to deny it? How could he reasonably hope, that Factious and Turbulent Practices should not deserve to be punish'd at least with *Reproach* and *Infamy*? How could he reasonably hope——But that I may encourage Modesty, especially in such a one as He, for the sake of that blushing Parenthesis, I will spare him at present, till he give me further occasion to deal more roughly with him.

From his private Station, which I cannot allow to extend any farther than to his Continuance at *Hamburgh*: For after his Return into *England*, he himself acknowledges, that he did embrace Civil Offices; and 'tis well known, that he was always edging himself in to make one in all the late shiftings of the Scene, and the Continuator of *Bakers Chronicle* attests him to have been nominated one of the *Councillors of State*, who were to abjure the Family of the *Stuarts*, and all Kingly Government; but these things it was his Interest to dissemble and conceal; and therefore I say, from his *Private Station*, as he calls it, he immediately passes to the time of his being chosen a Sheriff of *London* and *Middlesex*; and because I resolve to keep up close with him, I must e'en take the same Leap too.

He tells us he was call'd forth by his Fellow-Citizens to a Publick Employment, (*meaning the Shrievalty*) *contrary to his Inclinations and Humor*, which indeed is both true and false: 'Tis very true it was *contrary to his Inclination and Humor*, to be at the Charge and Expence which usually attends the Execution of that Office, as the Event has sufficiently shewn; but that it was *contrary to his Inclination and Humor* to have in his Hands the Power of doing Mischief, which accompanies it, is as false: For otherwise, why should he take the Sacrament, according to the Rites of the Church of *England*, the Oath of Allegiance, &c. (about which he and his Conscience were not agreed for Twenty Years before) merely to qualifie himself for that Employment, when 'tis probable the Court of Aldermen would rather have given him Money to be rid of him, than insisted upon any high Fine to excuse him.

Well, Mr. *Betbel* is Sheriff of *London* and *Middlesex*, and would have been a Burgess of *Southwark*: And what then? Why then he falls a complaining most bitterly of his hard Fate, that he can no sooner leave his *Private Station*, and stand in Competition for Places of great Honor and Trust, but presently men enquire whether he be fit to be trusted? and search into the History of his Life, and slander him with all the matter of Truth that they can collect. And is it not a most sad and deplorable Case, that a man of his Bulk and Character, who comes and says upon his Word, that he is as honest, and wise, and every way as fit to be our Representative as any man we can chuse, should be so contemptuously repulsed and baulked as he was by a company of inquisitive and unconfiding Burghers?

And now that by chance I have mention'd Mr. *Betbel*, and Honesty, and Wisdom in one Paragraph, I cannot but take notice of the extraordinary Cast he gives us of both, in his assuming the Honor of being one of our Representatives, and making one great reason of Writing this Vindication of his to be, That those of the Neighbouring Borough *may not be thought to have been mistaken and deceived in the Person whom they preferred to a place of so great Trust*, p. 2. Was it honest in him to insinuate to the World, That he had been chosen a Burgess for *Southwark*, when he was excluded by a considerable Majority, and those more considerable for their Quality than Number? It being highly probable, that the misled men who crowded for him, might as easily have been persuaded to give their Votes for *John Doe* and

Richard Roe. And was it wise for him to tell us in Print, that we had elected him, when we knew we had not? No, No, Mr. Bethel, such Tricks will not do with us. We that oppoled you, are satisfied, that we were not (as you say well) *miskaken and deceived* in you, and Multitudes of those, who through a Blind Zeal appear'd for you, are now enlightened and convinced that they were mistaken: So that I would advise you, as a Friend, that if when His Majesty shall be pleas'd to Summon another Parliament, you find the same hankering after a Membership continue upon you, you would apply your self to some other Borough, where you are less known than here.

Having acquainted us, to our Amazement, that he was our Burgess, he proceeds next (with a Consistency peculiar to himself) to let the World know the Obstacles which hindred him from being so. He says, That to disable him from holding any Place of so great Trust, *It was objected that he was a Papist and a Jesuit;* and that upon some Variance happening between him and Dr. Oates, he did declare, that he knew him beyond the Seas to be such; that he was a Soldier in the Parliament's Army, in the time of the late Wars, and was most cruel and unmerciful in the Exercise of Arms; that being at Hamburgh at such time as the Late King's Death was resolved on in England, he did there say, That rather than he should want an Executioner, he would come thence to perform the Office; and that he was not only one of the Late King's Judges, but one of those two persons, in Vizzards, that assisted on the Scaffold at his Death.

To each of these Articles he says something, which he hoped, no doubt, would look like an Answer; but the whole amounts only to this, that he flatly denies 'em all.

But if none of these things were true, how comes it to pass, that after he had boasted under Article 3, p. 3. That he has brought his Action at Law for the Vindication of himself in that point, he should yet drop that Action with two more of the same Nature; and that the Prospect of 30000l. (for so much he laid his Damage) should not be sufficient to encourage him to be at the common charge of the Law to go on with them? Whence should arise so much Smoak if there were no Fire? How did it charrce that the rest of the Competitors had not the like Brands of Infamy fastened upon them? Whence did it proceed that all the Dirt of the City and Town should be thrown into his Cart? Certainly he is one of the most unfortunate Men that ever left *Private Station*, if he be innocent.

That he is Innocent, we have only his own Word, and how far that ought to weigh, we may judge from what follows in his next Paragraph, concerning a Paper, Published soon after the Election, entitled, *How and Rich, &c.* (which by the way I observe lies very heavy upon his Stomack) out of which Scandalous Libel, as he calls it, he unluckily selects that Passage between him and Mr. Mason, one of the King's Watermen, who, when Mr. Bethel threatened to pull his Coat over his Ears, replied, *Ay Sir, so perhaps you would my Master's too, if it were in your Power.* This Mr. Bethel declares to be most notoriously false, and without any Color or Ground of Truth, p. 4.

There lying now so much Stress upon Mr. Bethel's Veracity, we will bring the Case to a short Issue: If no such words pasted at the time and place of the Poll between those two Gentlemen, then I will take Mr. Bethel's bare Denial of the foregoing Articles, to be a just Vindication. But to see how Time will bring things to light! It happen'd, that on Wednesday, June the 29th, 1681. a General Sessions of the Peace being then holden for the Borough of Southwark, at the Bridge-horse-hall, by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, and Mr. Sheriff

iff Bethel being there present, an Indictment was exhibited against him upon the occasion of these words, together with the foul Battery that accompanied them; and the Battery and Words were proved by the Oaths of four substantial Witnesses, and the Bill accordingly found by the Grand Jury. Now I leave the Reader to judge, whether he that will Print a Lye, to wipe off a smart Repartee, is likely to boggle at lying, or un-saying any thing to bring himself off in Matters of so heinous a Nature as the Articles contain.

Having hitherto put on as good and as bold a Face as the former matters required, he next proceeds to some Exceptions of a less dangerous Nature, that have been made against him; and expressing a wonderful Glee, that the Laws of the Land do not make Covetousness a Capital Crime, he becomes now unconcern'd, and cares not much if it be admitted to be wholly true, that he is an Intimate, a Gardeener, and all that: For he hopes this will be no good Exception in the Case of a Burgess to serve in Parliament; telling us it is a *Maxim*, *That those that are most saving of their own Estates, will be most careful of the Peoples;* thereby unhandsomely insinuating, that a Parliament-Man is only a kind of *Paddock*, for securing the Peoples Money, whatever just occasion there may be to part with it: But pray Mr. Bethel, come no more among us with your sordid *Maxims*; 'tis well known, that we have better *Maxims* of our own; and you may see by all the Papers we have Published since you gave us the last Trouble, that this *Maxim* is like to do you but little Service with us. In *How and Rich*, you will find, that one part of the Character which recommended those Gentlemen to our Choice, was, *That they were Liberal Benefactors to the Poor of our Borough.* In our Address to them at their setting forth towards Oxford, we declare it our Opinion, *That it is highly reasonable that we should help to defray the Charge, as well as enjoy the Benefit of His Majesties Gracious Government and Protection;* and in our Address to His Majesty, upon the Occasion of his late Declaration, we humbly assure His Majesty, *That whenever His Majesty in his Princely Wisdom and Providence, shall see fit to call another Parliament, we will take all possible care to chuse such Representatives as shall be ready to present His Majesty with such Supplies as the Dignity of the Crown, and the Necessities of the Government shall require.* By this Mr. Bethel, you may judge, that your Temper and ours do not at all agree, and you may rest satisfied, that the Borough of Southwark will never be guilty of so great a Blunder, as to send to the Parliament such a Mis-representative as your self.

The Subject of the following part of his *Pamphlet* is very pleasant and diverting; and with (or indeed without) Mr. Sheriff's Leave, that the Reader may know what Entertainment he is to expect, I shall give him the following Bill of Fare. 1. Here is the Grandeur of living in a Garret. 2. The Hospitality of keeping no House; and, 3. The Charity of Starving Poor Pris'ners. But you will say, these are all empty Dishes: Why truly if they be, I cannot help it, they are such as Mr. Sheriff's Table and Book afford.

For unless you will allow Mr. Bethel the Titles of Great, and Hospitable, and Charitable, in spite of that Contradiction which his Actions give to them all, there is nothing which he says for himself, that can give him any shadow or color of Right to either.

Indeed, to vindicate his Honor from the Disparagement of living in a Garret, he says, That to avoid the Trouble and Inconveniency, which commonly attends the Shifting of Lodgings, he took the House he now lives in; but such a House it is, as is rarely to be seen in the City of London: For this House has neither Garrets nor Cellars, nor Rooms on the first Floor; so that either he must acknowledge himself to have taken only some Rooms of an House, and conse-

consequently to be an Inmate, or else he must be suppos'd to live in a *Wind-mill*; for there is no other sort of House that I can think of, which answers that Description.

He goes on to tell us what I would not for a World should be omitted by the Writer of his Life; That at the Beginning of his Year, he kept two Feasts, of Famous Memory, to his great Charge: Nay, that he had agreed for a fair large Inn (much better, and more capacious than the *other House*) and had resolv'd to keep a plentiful Ordinary, and for one Year round, to live as merry as mine Host; but, as he says, it fell out unluckily to this purpose, that the Ancient, Wise, Prudent, Sumptuary Laws of the City, lighting hard upon his Conscience, and a Repulse received from the Court of Aldermen, sticking fast in his Gizzard; these two Accidents gave such a Check to his Natural Complacency, that he presently un-resolved all again, and has not been in an Entertaining Humor ever since.

As for the former of these Accidents, I shall only make this Remark upon it, That of all Laws, Mr. Sheriff *Bethel* has most diligently enquired into, and most religiously observ'd the Sumptuary Laws, they being (as he observes) *most wholesome* for the Pocket: Though I cannot imagine those Laws do forbid any Person to exceed a Nine-penny Dinner so strictly, as not to allow him the Liberty of an *Orange* with his Plate of Veal; and yet this is a Law which a Renowned Citizen (who to avoid the ungrateful Repetition of the same word too often, shall be nameless) has for a certain enacted to himself.

For the latter, I have obliged my self to give an account of it, so far as the Ward which return'd him is concern'd, and it is briefly thus: The Alderman of the Ward of *Farindon Without*, dying, the Principal Inhabitants, upon Conference with one another, found themselves divided in their Opinions, concerning the Superiority of Merit between Sir *Richard How* and Mr. *Pilkinton*, and yet resolv'd, if possible, to have one of them. Of this indeed they might have been certain, if they had return'd them two; but it is to be consider'd, that then there had been no Tryal of Skill between their two Parties; and also that being both worthy Men, either of them which should be assign'd to that Office, would have seem'd to be the Court of Aldermen's Choice, rather than theirs: Hereupon, to leave as little scope as might be to the Court of Aldermen, for the exercise of their Prerogative, both parties consented to return Mr. Sheriff *Bethel* for one, as knowing him to be a person so un-acceptable to that Court, that they might be sure of him of the other two, to whom it should fall by the Decision of their own Votes. So that that Gentleman who lost it at the Poll, had more respect shewn him by the Ward, than he who carried it without a Poll; and they unanimously agreed to chuse Mr. *Bethel*, because they knew they were in no Danger of being troubled with him. And now Sir, much Joy to you of the Honor of that *General Consent*, and the *concurrent Votes* which you so highly boast of.

Now, because the Court of Aldermen had discovered a Dislike of his Company, he therefore resolves and declaims against House-keeping; and groundlessly misplacing his Anger, falls foul upon the Innocent; and without any Provocation in the Earth, does vent such undeserved Reproaches, and bitter Invectives against all the Dishes of a Generous Sheriff's Table, even from Rost-Beef to Custard, that certainly it is his Interest to dissuade all men from reading his Book till they have Dined: For no Hungry Stomach can with Patience bear, to have its good Friends and Allies so vilely abused.

He says, that nothing can be less Honourable to the Sheriffs than Feasting of the Companies, that good Eating is a great Expence of time, and a plentiful

Table

Table an Enemy to that sober Industry which is the rise and glory of a Trading City; as if a sober industrious Trader, who intended to thrive and grow wealthy, were obliged now and then to satisfie himself with the refreshment of sucking a Button, and be glad to take up with the smell of a Cooks shop instead of a Meal. Beef and Mutton defend us! say I: If this man were Manciple, he would within the compass of a Week so effectually promote his Landlords Trade, as to deserve to sit Rent-free; for within that time our Bellies would dwindle and grow so lank, that happy were he who could get a Taylor to adjust the Waist-band of his Breeches.

Being destitute of any farther Arguments to put a colour upon his sordid way of living in so publick an Employment, he falls to his Prayers to God, that among other Sins, Fulness of Bread, which was charged upon Sodom and Jerusalem, as one Cause of Gods Judgments, may not grow to that height in this City, as to become the Ruin and Destruction of it. I do not love to jest in Serious Matters, and shall therefore only take notice, that there are certain Citizens under his Custody, who, through his Neglect, are able truly to plead Not Guilty to that Charge. Had Mr. Sheriff Bethel fed the Poor, instead of Feasting the Rich; had he supply'd the Defect of Splendid Entertainments by an extraordinary Charity towards his Prisoners, he might have had a fairer Plea: But he himself, without blushing, grants it to be true, that he does not contribute to the Relief of their Necessities, and has so utterly renounc'd all Modesty, as boldly to undertake to prove it his Duty to be unmerciful. For mark you me, by putting a Stop to the usual Payments; If any Prisoners be famish'd this Year, the Court of Aldermen, and a Committee of the City will take care to prevent the like Mischief against the next: And my holding of my Hand, says he, will prevail with others to open theirs, and encourage them to Chriftable Benevolences and Legacies, for the Maintenance of those wretched People. *Heavens*, what Arguments are these! But such a man can never be defended but by such Logic.

I shall now trouble the Reader no further, after I have told him that I am a Person not at all delighted in enquiring after, or exposing and publishing the Vices or Follies of any man; and, as probably I had never known that he has been reported to be a Jesuite, one of the late Kings Judges, &c. unless he himself had told me; so the World had never known for me, that his carriage towards his own Company of *Leather-Sellers* has been such, that they have thought fit, contrary to their usual Method of Proceeding, to wave his *Merit of Congruity* in their late Election of a Master, notwithstanding that he is present Sheriff of London: That a Person who might have escap'd a troublesome, and (to any but himself) a Chargeable Office, by swearing that he was not worth 10000*L*. should yet (to come off for a Shilling, at the time of the last *Poll-Tax*) give order to a Maid-Servant, to acquaint the Officers, that he was a *Decayed Merchant*; That when he knew the *Easter Sermons* were to be at S. Sepulchres, he should yet perversly make a Ridiculous Cavalcade to the Spittle by himself, like the Pied Piper of *Halberstadt* drawing all the Boys and Girls in the Town after him. These things, I say, with all which has gone before, I should not have concern'd my self to Publish, had he not provok'd me to enquire concerning him, and by lewdly applying a Text of Scripture to himself, with a seeming, mighty Confidence of his own Innocence, challeng'd all the World to Come down and see.